

February 22, 2011

## Clean Energy Grant Program – Application Procedures

Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) has redesigned the Clean Energy Grant Program (the Program). Our goal is to simplify and streamline the grant process for system owners, system installers, and MEA. Our hope is that the new forms, new procedures, and updated web pages will help reduce the administrative time for all parties involved and shorten the time for **complete and accurate** grant requests to move from initial application to payment.

This document describes some of the key changes that have been made to the Program.

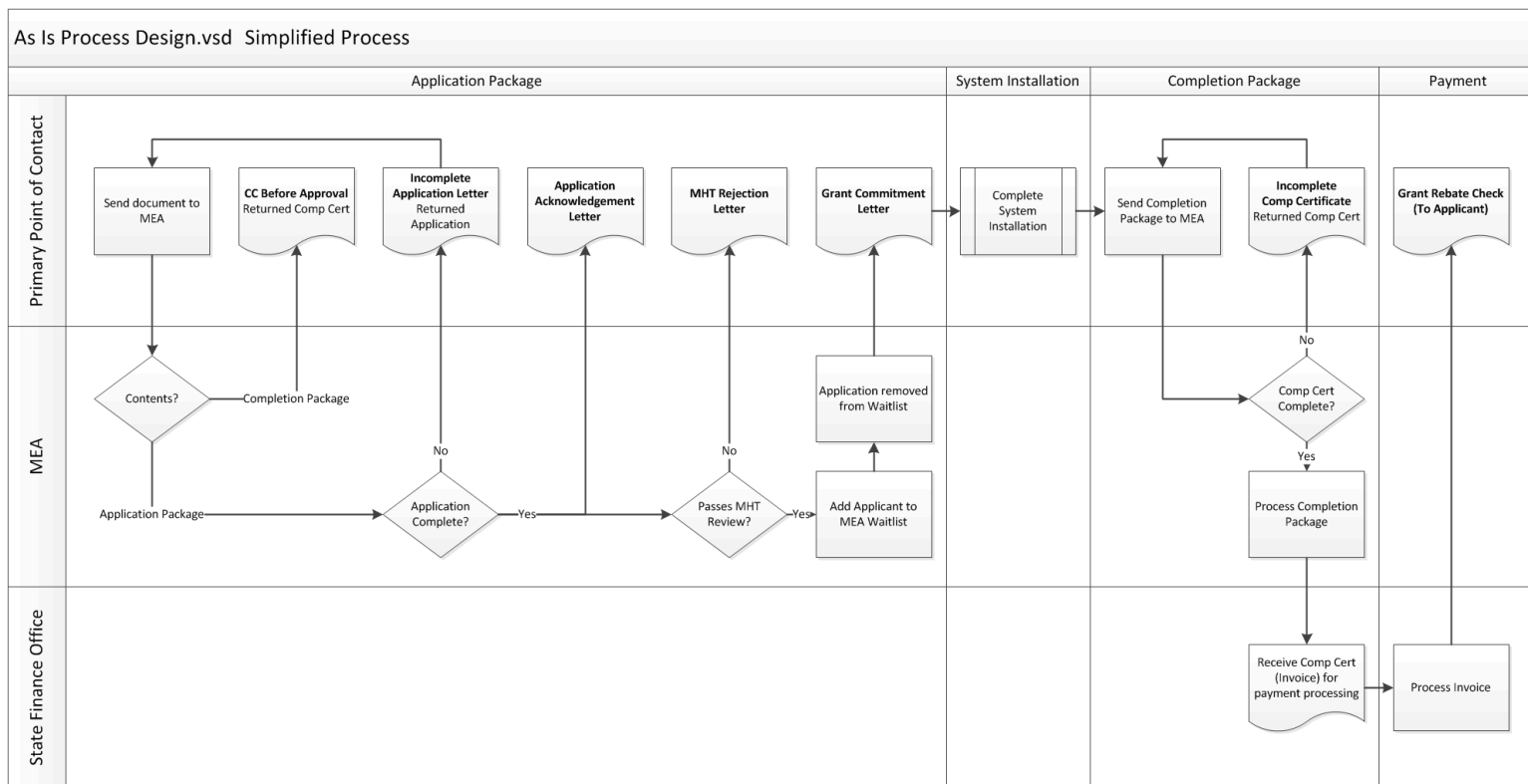
### General Changes

Applicants will now select documents based on applicant sector (Residential or Commercial) and technology (Solar Photovoltaic, Solar Water Heating, Geothermal Heat Pump, and Wind Turbine). Each combination of the sector and technology will have a corresponding Application and Completion Certificate form. Two “Terms and Conditions” documents will be used, one each for Commercial and Residential. Applications will be mailed to the attention of either the Residential or Commercial Grant Program at MEA.

### New Program Process

The new process has been designed to minimize the amount of time that **a complete and accurate** grant request takes to move from initial application to payment. As such, **documents that are sent to MEA with missing or incomplete information will be returned to the Primary Point of Contact (PPC) without being processed by MEA**. To reduce the burden on everyone, it is imperative that all submissions to MEA be thoroughly checked for completeness before they are submitted.

The following process diagram outlines the new process



Many installers offer grant management services as part of their product offering. Under the new process, applicants and installers may designate a PPC to receive all communication from MEA. Any mailings, calls, or letters will be directed to the PPC. If an applicant chooses to make the installer the PPC, the applicant will receive courtesy notices as the application moves through the process. It will be solely up to the PPC to ensure all paperwork is completed.

The Grant process begins with the PPC completing an Application Form and sending it, along with all supporting documentation, to MEA. If any information is missing or incomplete, the application package will be returned in its entirety to the PPC with a letter and checklist indicating what is missing. If the application is complete, it is routed through the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) review process. If the application passes MHT review, the PPC will receive an Application Acknowledgement Letter indicating that their application has been received. If there is a waitlist for funding, the Applicant will be placed on it automatically. Applicants will be removed from the waitlist in the order their application was received complete, and as funding becomes available. Once the application is approved, the PPC will receive a Grant Commitment Letter that officially reserves funding for the project.

After the PPC has received the Grant Commitment Letter and completed the project, they must submit to MEA the Completion Certificate and supporting documents. MEA will verify the information received to ensure completeness and return any completion packages with missing or incomplete information to the PPC with a letter and checklist indicating missing items. Once the completion package is complete, the grant will be sent to the State of Maryland's Finance Office for processing and issuance of payment.

Please note that the Application and Completion Certificate forms require **original** signatures of the applicant. The PPC must collect these from their applicant. MEA will not accept photocopies or

scanned documents. Installers are reminded that they cannot, under any circumstances, sign forms on behalf of the applicant.

## **New Application and Completion Certificate Forms**

We have simplified the forms to request only the information needed to meet our statutory, regulatory, and program management needs. The forms have a clear and concise checklist that details all the items that must be included for the application or completion package to be accepted.

**Note: The new forms are designed to be filled out electronically.** Several validations are built into the PDF files that help eliminate missing or erroneous information. For example: the total grant amount is calculated based on Program parameters. Counties, legislative, and Congressional districts are found in drop-down tables. Social security or FEIN numbers are validated to ensure proper format. A list of permits required by each county will be included for reference. While the forms may be printed and completed by hand, we strongly encourage the PPC to complete these electronically. Any applications or other materials that are deemed illegible will also be returned to the PPC unprocessed.

All forms must still be printed, signed with an original signature, and mailed to MEA along with the required supporting documentation. We intend to move to an electronic application process, but this will take time.

## **New Letters to PPC**

### **Application Acknowledgement Letter**

We will begin sending out an Application Acknowledgement Letter indicating that an application has been received, is complete, and has been placed in queue. Once on the waitlist, the application may remain in this status for several weeks, depending on the total number of applications in process.

### **Grant Commitment Letter**

We have modified our Grant Commitment Letter to direct Applicants to the current forms on our website. This Letter also notes timelines for the submission of information to MEA.

### **Completion Certification Before Application Approval Letter**

Under the new process, the Completion Package may not be submitted to MEA before the Grant Commitment Letter is generated for the Applicant. The PPC may submit the signed Grant Commitment Letter with the Completion Package. If the PPC submits the Completion Package before the grant has been approved, all information provided by the PPC will be returned, unprocessed, along with a letter of explanation.

### **Maryland Historical Trust Review Rejection**

In the rare instance where the Historical Trust Review finds the modification to the building unacceptable, MEA will notify the PPC that the application cannot be accepted. We will return the entire grant application package to the PPC along with a letter of explanation.

## New Program Terms and Conditions

The Program Terms and Conditions (T&Cs), for both Residential and Commercial installations, have been updated to reflect changes in the Program. The Commercial T&Cs have two additional items related to American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) funding restrictions: Davis Bacon Prevailing Wage Act information, and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review for ground mount photovoltaic systems over 60 kW. The two documents are otherwise identical.

## Website Modifications

The MEA website pages dedicated to the Program will be extensively modified. Residential and Commercial applicants are no longer divided by size, but rather based on the type of applicant (Residential/Commercial). Because the grant process has been standardized across technologies, the Residential and Commercial home pages will host Program-wide information with links to technology-specific forms.

## Concluding Comments

We hope that the Clean Energy Grant Program redesign helps reduce the administrative burden on all parties and shortens the time it takes for an applicant to receive their grant check. We welcome your comments on any and all aspects of the redesign, from the functionality of the new forms to process improvement recommendations.

While we will strive to incorporate useful suggestions into the process prior to implementation, please note that there are certain constraints that we must work under; for example: grant checks must be mailed - and paid - to the applicant whose Social Security Number or Federal Employee Identification Number appears on the application (not the installer), all signatures must be original, and any incomplete submissions will be returned to the PPC.

Feedback should be sent to [klucas@energy.state.md.us](mailto:klucas@energy.state.md.us), with the subject line: "Clean Energy Grant Program Feedback."

Kevin Lucas  
Clean Energy Program Manager